

Rand Mountains Management Area



Education and Permit Program Map



BLM

BLM Desert Planning

The **Federal Land Policy and Management Act** of 1976 (FLPMA) began the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) current mission to manage for multiple uses on federal lands. Multiple-use requires the agency to sustainably manage the land and take into account the long-term needs of future American generations. FLPMA mandates that the public lands be managed to protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, and environmental resources and preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition and provide for outdoor recreation and other human uses including grazing, minerals, watershed, and wildlife.

The **California Desert Conservation Area** (CDCA) was created in FLPMA. The California desert environment and its resources, including certain rare and endangered species of wildlife and plants, and archaeological and historic sites are seriously threatened by pressures of increased uses. The desert environment is an ecosystem that is extremely fragile, easily scarred, and slow to heal. The planning process for the CDCA Plan and its subsequent amendments have included extensive public input. The CDCA Plan was approved in 1980.

The **Rand Mountains Management Area** (RMMA) has been popular with OHV enthusiasts, rock-hounders, and environmentalists since the 1960's. After the federal listing of the desert tortoise, the BLM developed the Rand Mountains-Fremont Valley Management Plan (Rand Plan) to evaluate the myriad of complex management issues and implement necessary and plausible solutions.

Mine Safety

In 1895, gold was discovered in the area near Randsburg. The RMMA encompasses a portion of the historic Atolia and Rand mining districts, the latter getting its name from a prosperous mining district in South Africa. Silver and tungsten have also been mined in the area.

Visitors may encounter the remains of large scale mineral operations and the area contains numerous deep shafts which may be obscured and sometimes adjacent to routes of travel. There are many dangers associated with old mines and BLM has been called upon to perform many mine rescues (photo). Abandoned mines should be observed from a safe distance. You should never enter or disturb any physical hazards associated with mines.

More than one hundred years of mining in the Randsburg area has resulted in high concentrations of arsenic in mine tailings and some desert washes. The BLM is currently performing a hazardous materials remediation program that involves rerouting or closing routes near contaminated areas. The best way to avoid exposure to these substances and abandoned mines is to **stay on the posted legal designated open routes**.



Technical Review Team

A Technical Review Team (TRT), a subcommittee of the CA Desert District Advisory Council (DAC), was formed to provide public input to the BLM on planning and implementation issues related to the RMMA EPP. The TRT includes Kern County Supervisors, members of the DAC, and BLM management. Members of stakeholder groups representing the recreation and environmental communities also provided additional insight and advice to the TRT.

For information and feedback contact Ridgecrest BLM: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/ridgecrest.html>

Education and Permit Program

In 2005, the West Mojave (WEMO) Plan amendment to the CDCA Plan, directed BLM to implement a visitor use education and permit program (EPP) for motorized vehicle use in the RMMA. The EPP will provide an overview and explanation about the RMMA designated route system and include information about vehicle use safety, sensitive restoration areas, habitat values, and recreational opportunities. A permit fee will be required to cover the administrative costs of managing the program. The goal of the RMMA EPP is to increase visitor compliance with the applicable rules and regulations of the Rand Plan. The RMMA EPP will be implemented in two phases.

Phase I

Phase I of the EPP will focus on outreach and education, and implement a no cost permit for the area. Beginning November 1, 2008, all motorized vehicle users in the RMMA will be required to obtain a permit and certify that they understand the designated route network on this map and agree to only **operate motor vehicles on the posted legal designated open routes identified on this map**.

Phase II

Beginning October 1, 2009, all motorized vehicle users in the RMMA will be required to complete a short user education program and purchase a special use permit for motorized travel. The program will include information presented in this map/brochure. The cost of the permit will be determined by the management costs associated with the program and will include law enforcement, monitoring, maintenance, and administration of the RMMA EPP.

Non-compliance with the rules and regulations of the RMMA will lead to alternative management decisions and may result in additional area closures.



Designated Route Network

The CDCA Plan (1980) designated four geographic multiple-use categories based on the sensitivity of resources and uses for all BLM lands in the CDCA, which includes motorized vehicle access. The categories are: Controlled (Class C), Limited (Class L), Moderate (Class M), and Intensive (Class I). Controlled use areas do not allow motorized access (e.g., wilderness) and intensive use areas allow unrestricted access (e.g., open areas). Limited use areas allow motorized vehicle use on approved routes of travel. The RMMA is a limited use area where **routes of travel are closed unless specifically signed open**.

In 1994, the Rand Plan approved a designated route system of 129 miles to allow for continued recreational use and access while minimizing impacts on the desert tortoise population and habitat. The legally designated open route system is posted with brown signs signifying the management area and route number. The WEMO Plan (2005) amendment to the CDCA Plan and Western Mojave Desert Off Road Vehicle Designation Project (2003) designated the current route network through extensive planning and attempted to balance the needs of all desert users. BLM encourages members of the public to join local organizations and provide input and advice on management decisions and future planning.

No person may use, drive, or otherwise operate a motorized vehicle except on those designated routes of travel that are identified by open route signs. (43 CFR 8364.1)(Federal Register Vol.59 No.115; June 16, 1994)

STAY ON DESIGNATED OPEN ROUTES

Violations of 43 CFR 8364.1 are punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000 and/or 12 months in jail.



Desert Tortoise

The desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) is the California State Reptile. This extremely adaptable creature has been around in its current form for 18 million years and has successfully adapted to changing environments. The Mojave species was separated from the larger population five million years ago after the creation of the Grand Canyon and resulting Colorado River. Desert tortoises have been observed to live up to 80 years, and longer, in the wild. As recent as the 1970's, desert tortoise population densities in the Fremont Valley were as high as 250 per square mile. Today, that number has declined to less than 20. In some regions of the Mojave Desert, the tortoise population densities have dropped below five per square mile, and some areas have seen the tortoise extirpated.

In 1990, the desert tortoise was listed as a federally-threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The RMMA, and much of the surrounding area, is listed as critical habitat for the desert tortoise. Desert tortoises are most active during the late winter and spring months, but remain active from March through September. During the hot summer months, tortoises will be most active during the morning and evening hours when the temperatures are less extreme. In general, desert tortoises hibernate from October through February, but may be active in the fall and winter months. In the event of rare desert rainstorms, desert tortoises are likely to emerge from their burrows for water, even during the winter hibernation months. Many tortoises will create catchments near their burrows to collect water. Avoid contact with tortoises and **stay on the posted legal designated open routes of travel**.

Threats to the Desert Tortoise

There are many threats to the survival of the Mojave species of desert tortoise. Among the top threats are:

Habitat fragmentation occurs as a result of highways, urban development, and route proliferation throughout the Mojave Desert. Habitat fragmentation impedes mobility of tortoises for mating, foraging, and juvenile dispersal, increases vehicle mortality and disturbance with increased human interaction, and destroys vegetation that provides shelter, shade, moisture retention, and wind protection that are essential for tortoise survival.

Upper Respiratory Disease Syndrome (URDS) has had a devastating impact on the desert tortoise population and occurs as a result of human interaction with tortoises and increased in the 1970's when many domesticated "pet" tortoises were released in to the wild.

The Mojave Desert entered a period of **severe drought** in the late 1980's and this has reduced the amount of available annual native plant forage which desert tortoises depend on for nutrition and water.

Predation from ravens, feral dogs, and coyotes has become an increasing problem with increased human use and development in the desert. Garbage attracts ravens, which prey on juvenile tortoises. Feral dogs and coyotes kill adult desert tortoises and the predator populations continue to grow.

Invasive plant species crowd out and outcompete native plant species because they are adapted to different environments. Invasive annual plant species in the Mojave Desert do not provide the same nutritional and moisture requirements as the native annual plant species for the desert tortoise. Invasive plant seeds are brought in and spread throughout the desert via human transportation, such as vehicles.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

FLPMA defines an ACEC as an area within the public lands where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes. FLPMA also states that priority will be given to the designation and protection of ACECs.



The **Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area** (DTNA) was created as an ACEC in 1977. The RMMA is adjacent to the DTNA and both management areas are desert tortoise critical habitat. Motorized travel in the DTNA is prohibited. For more information, visit the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee web site at www.tortoise-tracks.org.

The **Western Rand Mountains ACEC** was designated as an ACEC for habitat and wildlife resources under the 1980 CDCA Plan. It was expanded under WEMO to include the Fremont Valley area.

Most of the RMMA lies within the Fremont-Kramer **Desert Wildlife Management Area** (DWMA). DWMA's were included in WEMO as recommended by the FWS Recovery Plan for the desert tortoise. DWMA's are areas that are essential to the long-term recovery, viability, and genetic diversity of the species and are implemented to provide for the long-term viability of tortoise populations and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

Desert Habitat Restoration



The BLM Ridgecrest Field Office, in partnership with **California State Parks and Recreation Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division**, has invested millions of dollars in habitat restoration in the RMMA associated with closed trail rehabilitation. Beginning in 1997 and continuing through 2009 and beyond, BLM Ridgecrest has worked with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) and Student Conservation Association (SCA) to restore designated closed trails in the RMMA. These restoration projects help reduce the negative impacts resulting from the major threats to the survival of the desert tortoise. Habitat restoration accelerates native revegetation, reclaims degraded lands, and reduces habitat fragmentation. Avoid impacts to the restoration areas and **stay on the posted legal designated open routes of travel**.

Other Listed & Species of Concern in the RMMA

The federally-threatened desert tortoise is not the only species BLM has to manage habitat for in the RMMA. Many other listed and sensitive animal species reside in, migrate through, and are dependent on the habitat provided in the RMMA. Among these are the California state-threatened **Mohave ground squirrel**, BLM sensitive species, and California species of concern, including **LeConte's thrasher**, numerous raptor species; **burrowing owl**, **northern harrier**, **golden eagle**, **prairie falcon**, **ferruginous hawk**, and four bat species; **California leaf-nosed**, **Townsend's big-eared**, **spotted**, and **pallid bats**.

Biodiversity is essential for the health of an ecosystem and the planet, which is made up of different systems that serve unique functions in the balance of nature. It is one of the missions of the BLM to protect ecological and environmental resources. All wildlife are dependent on vegetation, and diverse plant species provide essential nutrients and shelter for the survival of a wide variety of wildlife species.



RMMA Rules and Regulations

STAY ON DESIGNATED OPEN ROUTES

Limited Use Area: The RMMA is a Limited Use Only Area. A legal route is marked with a brown numbered post. It is illegal to ride anywhere in the RMMA, except on posted designated open routes identified on this map.

Environmental Damage: No person shall operate an off-highway vehicle (OHV) in a manner likely to cause environmental damage.

Camping: Camping is only allowed in designated areas. If you camp, remember to "Pack It Out" and leave the area cleaner than you found it. Please clean out any metal material in the fire ring prior to departing.

Firearms: Target shooting is prohibited. No person may discharge a firearm at any time except shotguns and then only the lawful taking of upland game birds in the upland and mountains portion of the area. The BLM encourages all hunters to use lead-free, nontoxic shot, which reduces the risks of lead poisoning of wildlife and will minimize negative impacts on the environment.

Helmet Usage: All terrain vehicle (ATV) riders must wear an approved safety helmet.

Noise Restrictions: Noise emission of OHVs shall be limited to not more than 96 dBA if manufactured on or after January 1, 1986, and not more than 101 dbA if manufactured prior to January 1, 1986.

Required Equipment: Any OHV must be equipped with an approved muffler, brakes, and spark arrester. Headlight and at least one red tail light are required for operation at night.

No Alcoholic Beverages Allowed While Riding on BLM Lands: No person shall drink an alcoholic beverage, have in their possession or on their person any open container that contains an alcoholic beverage while operating a motor vehicle on public lands administered by the BLM within California. No person under Age 21 shall be in possession of alcoholic beverages.

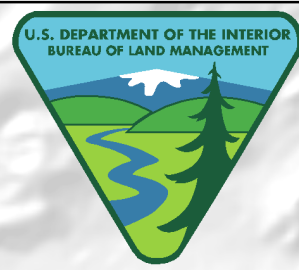
Parental Supervision: No person under the age of 14 shall operate an ATV unless that person satisfies the requirements of 38503 C.V.C (safety certification) and is accompanied by and under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian.



Rider Safety: No person under the age of 18 shall operate an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) unless he or she has received the safety course or is under the direct supervision of an adult who has the appropriate safety certification in his or her possession. No operator of an ATV shall carry a passenger while operating on public lands, except one passenger may be carried if the ATV is designed to carry a passenger.

Registration:

1. Vehicles operated on Federal and State highways, County roads must be licensed for highway use. 2. Off-highway vehicles owned by CA residents must be registered with the CA Department of Motor Vehicles and properly display a valid Green or Red Sticker Vehicle Identification Tag. 3. OHVs that do not have a valid registration or permit from the owner's home state are required to display a CA nonresident permit available through vendors in California, Nevada, and Arizona. Permits may be purchased at the Jawbone Station Visitor Center or from California Department of Parks and Recreation. For more information on CA OHMVR Division go to: <http://ohv.parks.ca.gov>



Rand Mountains Management Area (RMMA) Designated Open Routes of Motorized Travel

Map Legend

- Rand Mountains Management Area
- Western Rand Mountains ACEC
- Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area
- Information Kiosk
- Designated Campground
- Street Legal Vehicles Only
- Designated Open Route**
 - 4WD (recommended)
 - ATV (recommended)
 - MC (recommended)

This Signed and Certified Map is Your Permit to Operate Motor Vehicles in the RMMA from Nov. 2008 - Sept. 2009

All Vehicles Must Stay on Posted Legal Designated Open Routes Identified on This Map

Protected Area
No Motorized Vehicles



To Ridgecrest
15 miles

To Jawbone
Station
5 miles

Red Mountain

Johannesburg

Randsburg

Government Peak

Koehn Lake

Munsey Road

Desert Tortoise Research
Natural Area

To California City
10 miles

To Kramer Junction
20 miles

Randsburg-Mojave Road

Goler Road

Garlock Road

RedRock-Randsburg Road

Area of Critical

Environmental Concern

Area of Critical

Environmental Concern

395

395

R115

R66

R66

R44

R44

R110

RM66

R10

R30

R34

R87

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